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ABSTRACT

This paper describes a model education program in art education. The goals of the program are to: (1) encourage higher levels of thinking; (2) increase knowledge of arts terminology, style, and concepts; and (3) develop the characteristics of creative thinking, in students from kindergarten through high school. The teaching focus requires the infusion of arts-making and arts-responding activities into the humanities, science, and mathematics curricula. It also requires regular, sequential instruction in art, music, dance, and theater in a manner that supports general education goals. It emphasizes students' use of higher levels of thinking (analysis, synthesis, and evaluation) as they observe artistic events or create art objects. In addition, it stresses the acquisition of those characteristics associated with creative thinking. Fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration are variously stressed depending upon the nature of the assignment. Central to the program is a commitment to at least one period per week of formal instruction in art and vocal music to students in elementary schools by state-certified specialists. For older students the opportunity to study with arts specialists is complemented through involvement in additional arts activities such as rehearsals for performances. Intensive staff development needs to accompany this program. (SM)

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THINKING THROUGH THE ARTS

A Comprehensive Arts in Education Program

City School District of New Rochelle
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What is THINKING THROUGH THE ARTS?

THINKING THROUGH THE ARTS is a model educational program validated by the New York State Department of Education. Its goals are to

- o encourage higher levels of thinking
- o increase knowledge of arts terminology, style, and concepts for heightened understanding of art objects and events.

and

- o develop the characteristics of creative thinking

in students from kindergarten through high school.

The success of THINKING THROUGH THE ARTS depends upon a broad staff development effort and the provision of a wide variety of aesthetic experiences for students. The teaching focus requires the infusion of arts-making and arts-responding activities into the humanities, science and mathematics curriculums.

It also requires regular, sequential instruction in art and music, dance, and theater in a manner that supports district general education goals. It emphasizes student use of higher levels of thinking--analysis, synthesis and evaluation--as they observe or create art objects and events. In addition, it stresses the acquisition of those characteristics associated with creative thinking: **fluency, flexibility, originality** and **elaboration**.

The following pages describe the several essential ingredients that make New Rochelle's Arts in Education program an effective strategy for attaining educational excellence. It is hoped that readers will find this pamphlet useful as they plan their own Arts in Education programs. For further information about THINKING THROUGH THE ARTS, contact:

Office of Instruction
City School District of New Rochelle
515 North Avenue
New Rochelle, New York 10801

For additional information on Arts in Education programs, see The NETWORK NOTEBOOK, published by the New York State Education Department, Bureau of Arts and Humanities, Albany, New York 12234.

Origin of THINKING THROUGH THE ARTS

THINKING THROUGH THE ARTS began as an effort to prove that the arts, as Harry Broady, noted aesthetician and educator, has often said, are both "necessary and nice." In 1979, after a ten year hiatus, New Rochelle re-introduced art and music specialists into its elementary schools in the belief that formal instruction in the arts by trained specialists was an essential part of every child's education. Around the same time, it made a long-term committment to the involvement of several arts and cultural organizations in the district's educational program as a means of encouraging classroom teachers to integrate the arts into their daily instructional plan.

In order to gain the greatest educational value from these experiences, the district involved both arts specialists and classroom teachers in a variety of long- and short-term staff development experiences. For the art and vocal music specialists, staff development activities consisted of exploratory sessions focussed on the developmental, sequential curriculum followed by joint sessions with classroom teachers. For classroom teachers, the staff development activities ranged from awareness sessions related to the power of the arts in education to background sessions at museums and performing arts centers where specific works of art were viewed, analyzed and enjoyed. Both classroom teachers and arts specialists explored the "translation" possibilities of providing rich, structured opportunities to integrate arts experiences into the teaching/learning process in their own rooms.

The district sought outside funds--seed money--to help get this ambitious program off to a solid start. A grant from the Office of Education, followed by a series of Title IV C grants from the State Education Department, enabled the district to buy time for coordination, staff development activities and an extensive evaluation process.

By 1985, New Rochelle was able to demonstrate a strong case for the relationship of a comprehensive Arts in Education program to the development of higher level thinking skills and knowledge of the arts. A rigorous evaluation process, whose results were confirmed by a panel appointed by the New York State Education Department, concluded that New Rochelle students were performing on a significantly higher level in thinking skills, creativity, and comprehension of the arts as a result of the Arts in Education program.

The following pages describe in detail the various aspects of this program and the findings of independent evaluators.

INSTRUCTION IN THE ARTS -- An essential ingredient

Central to THINKING THROUGH THE ARTS is commitment to at least one period a week of formal instruction in art and vocal music by state-certified specialists to students in its six elementary schools. For older students (4th, 5th and 6th graders) the opportunity to study with arts specialists is complemented by their involvement in additional arts activities such as rehearsals for performances, lunch-time art studios or "talent" classes. In addition, each school offers residencies in dance and/or drama through its employment of locally based artists in residence.

Classroom instruction in the arts reflects advice given by acknowledged experts in the field--past and present--and the extensive experience of New Rochelle's own teachers. It includes arts-making activities, aesthetic criticism, and art history. Where possible, the arts, separately or together, are connected to the humanities, science and mathematics curriculums.

ARTS-MAKING ACTIVITIES

The visual arts curriculum requires students to engage in a variety of painting, sculpting and assemblage activities. The purpose of these activities is three-fold: to enable students to express ideas through visual imagery, to teach them how to use the tools of visual expression with increasing skill, and to discover the relationship between their work and the art they see around them. Evaluation of their own and others' work is an element that teachers strive to include as part of every teaching unit. Art-making classes are not strictly production sessions; frequently they are "talk" sessions where students discuss the work of professional artists in a context that relates to their own art work.

On a typical day, a visitor might see the following art-making activities:

- Kindergarteners making various clay reptiles for a three-dimensional habitat that they have conceived from their study of dinosaurs
- First-graders painting pictures of their families using colors that they mix themselves
- Second graders making designs out of paper "looms" in preparation for a major weaving assignment
- Third graders making small group murals of life at school using rolls of Kraft paper, cray-pas (oil-based crayons), and scraps of cloth
- Fourth graders rendering landscapes based on a field trip to a local historical site using techniques for organizing shapes and background as modeled by the teacher

- Fifth graders making masques of papier-mache based upon their study of rituals in Ancient Greece

- Sixth graders making musical instruments based on designs they developed using plywood, string, glue, paint, and various measuring and cutting tools.

Each of the activities involves teachers and students in planning processes, one-on-one "technical assistance," and periodic evaluation discussions where the work in question is appraised in its own terms.

Teachers have been encouraged to stress the creative thinking capacities of children as they develop their projects. Thus, fluency, flexibility, originality and elaboration are variously stressed, depending upon the nature of the assignment. There is particular emphasis on elaboration so that students learn the virtues of the complex statement.

Arts making is not confined to the visual arts studio, however. Students in dance learn to choreograph ideas, story-lines, characterizations and abstract feelings. Theater students explore the creative process by developing improvisations which lead to the writing of scenes. Music students experiment with the transformation of noise to sound with melody, rhythm and structure through the use of their own voices and Orff (special rhythm) instruments.

AESTHETIC CRITICISM

New Rochelle believes that students need frequent exposure to "live" art in the form of professional as well as student performances and visits to art exhibits at museums and galleries. Moreover, the district believes that such encounters with the lively arts should be paired with opportunities for reflection upon the form, meaning, and value of the presentation or object. Therefore, as part of its Arts in Education program, the district has introduced a rigorous strand of aesthetic criticism into both the arts and general classrooms.

In its staff development series, "The Student as Critic," the district has outlined the essential elements of aesthetic criticism and has given teachers a means of stimulating discussion and writing in this area. Aesthetic criticism begins in kindergarten as students are encouraged to describe what they see, hear, feel, touch, and smell. Viewing live art is introduced as well as experiences in cooking, movement, and other energetic activities. Each activity is accompanied by student-teacher and student-student dialogue that elicits reactions to the experience over and beyond the "I liked it--I hated it" response.

Teachers of younger students emphasize a lot of "art talk" that leads children to describe in great detail what they have just seen, felt, tasted or smelled. Teachers are not afraid to prod first or second graders to justify their statements with examples and additional information. Teachers of older students continue the "art talk" but additionally develop writing activities associated with aesthetic experiences. A holistic scoring grid , developed as part of the

"Student as Critic" series, enables teachers to rate student writing on formal, expressive and usage levels, hitting those elements of aesthetic criticism that they feel are most important at that moment. (See Staff Development section, page 8.)

If a visitor were to pop in on a class engaged in aesthetic criticism, here is what might be seen:

- Kindergarteners discussing the applesauce that they just made, describing its taste, texture, and ability to satisfy

- 1st and 2nd graders examining a slide of Henry Moore's "Reclining Figure," after visiting the Pepsico Sculpture Gardens in Purchase where a version of the piece is exhibited.

  The children talk about:

  The **formal** properties (what is this we see, its size in relation to the viewer, the relationships between the various parts of the figure, the use of negative space),

  The **expressive** qualities (the implied attitude of the figure, the feelings evoked by the piece, possible meaning of no hands, no feet), the **sensory** qualities (how does this feel, look -- students will have legally touched the sculpture on their visit to the Sculpture Garden, thank goodness!)

  The **technical** qualities: (materials and tools used, the need for a complicated process).

  The teacher may introduce:

  pictures of old Roman and Greek figures where parts of the body have been lost and ask children to compare the antique sculptures with Moore's.

  The teacher will describe:

  Moore's own study of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture, and how artists frequently use the past as a jumping off point for their own work.

- 3rd and 4th graders moving among the sculpture and paintings of the constructivist era as displayed at the Neuberger Museum at SUNY/Purchase, assignment sheets in hand, looking for specific objects that fulfill a description on their worksheet. At this moment, they may be looking for those objects that demonstrate the formal property of

balance. Their teacher and the museum docent move easily among the group, suggesting a stop at one piece or another.

- 5th and 6th graders reflecting upon the mural they are in the midst of creating on a school wall. With the aid of their resident artist and art teacher, they discuss the technical details, then matters of composition. (Should the figure of Christopher Columbus be quite so close to the group observing the performance? Do we need so much background color there?)

Discussions of aesthetics are not limited to the art room or museum. When students are taken to a musical performance, a play or a dance concert, they frequently talk about, then write about their experience--often emphasizing the formal, expressive, sensory and technical aspects of the work. These discussions are sometimes led by classroom teachers who themselves have undergone a rigorous training in aesthetic analysis. At other times, they are led by arts specialists or resident artists. Aesthetic criticism belongs to everyone, teacher and student alike.

INFUSING THE ARTS INTO THE GENERAL CURRICULUM

Teachers spend a good deal of their planning time considering how to infuse the arts into their so-called general curriculum. To the teacher responsible for the social studies units, this is a fairly straightforward operation. The study of historical periods (American history, local history, ancient history, world history as defined by the state curriculum guides) lends itself to a close examination of the visual and performing arts of the period. This is when a teacher can show the relationship of the arts to time and place. It is also when a teacher can encourage students to inquire about the historical forces that seem to spawn certain artistic statements. For example, when the students are studying local history (American history seen through local developments), it is quite natural for them to study contemporary portraits of local big-wigs during the period of colonialization or the establishment of the new nation. It is natural that they will explore the aesthetic meaning as well as the historical meaning of the portraits (see above), and it is also natural that they discuss the historical circumstances of wealth, position and power as they contribute to the portrait-making process.

It is less natural for some to consider infusing music, art, dance and drama into mathematics and science lessons. New Rochelle teachers find it helpful to consult materials developed by arts and cultural organizations such as the Metropolitan Museum of Art when they look for arts connections. The Met has published a much appreciated teaching package that relates Islamic art with the study of geometry. What a natural! They have also developed materials that explore the mathematical properties of Greek, Roman and Early Christian art. They try to avoid the stilted or unnatural connection. They do not try to teach

geometry through dance; rather, they would try to explore how an understanding of geometry helps to find the language and structure within a particular dance piece. It is the natural connection that works best; teachers and artists are concerned that the integrity of the art work is not lost in the enthusiasm to infuse the arts into the basic curriculum. Below are some examples of how New Rochelle teachers work the arts into the curriculum:

Art Object or Event	Student Activity
Performance of "Teddy" by Theatreworks/USA	Language Arts: Students write critical essay as one might find in the New York Times.
African Art Exhibit at Neuberger	Social Studies: Students make masks under supervision of both art and classroom teacher
Sol LeWitt exhibit at Museum of Modern Art	Mathematics: Students create mathematical designs on paper in the style of LeWitt, having discussed the mathematical properties of the works on view
Photos of 20th century buildings	Mathematics: Students analyze geometric shapes and their usefulness in solving engineering problems, i.e. the tetrahedron
A brass quintet concert presented by Young Audiences	Science (physics): Students will discover the relationship between length of tubing and pitch
Film performance of "Appalachian Spring" by Martha Graham and Company	Social Studies: Students report on what they have discovered about the Shakers in New York State and Ohio

ARTS HISTORY

New Rochelle teachers try to help students place works of art in an historical context--even in elementary school. Art teachers and music teachers build into their curriculum a study of the progression of art work from the early days of mankind to the present time. This is done with an appreciation of a child's ability to understand the concepts of now and long ago. Therefore, it is not unusual for a fifth or sixth grade class to engage in a discussion with their art teacher on the differences between the Renaissance portrait by Leonardo da Vinci (The Mona Lisa) and Matisse's Harmony in Red or Hans Holbein the Younger's

portrait of Henry VIII with Delacroix's Frederic Chopin. Students will be led to discover differences in materials, tools, style, and approaches to subject matter. They will study time lines that juxtapose artistic achievement with the great social, political and economic events highlighted in the elementary social studies curriculum.

Similarly, music teachers, especially when preparing students for performances at Avery Fisher Hall or SUNY/Purchase, will emphasize the historical context of the works to be heard. By the sixth grade, many students can indicate that a Bach or Handel composition pre-dated one by Beethoven, and certainly pre-dated Bernstein, simply by listening to a recording.

Emphasizing the historical place of works of art supports the general goal of helping students better understand the concepts of time and place. It provides concrete examples of how people interpreted the world around them. And it signals to students that any study of history is a study of the cultural legacy and vice versa. Moreover, by accenting the historical. teachers help students learn more about the objects and events that comprise our cultural legacy--one of the goals of THINKING THROUGH THE ARTS.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT -- Means to an end

The ambitious goals of THINKING THROUGH THE ARTS could never be pursued without an equally ambitious staff development program. In New Rochelle, teachers are offered a variety of staff development opportunities that enable them to strengthen their background and skill in one or more of the arts. Every in-service course or workshop tries to include within it not only information about a particular arts discipline, but practical examples of how this information can be translated into workable learning activities for students.

In the past few years, for example, the following staff development opportunities were available to teachers (those asterisked involved a modest fee):

"The Arts and Basic Skills," a series of nine workshops held at various cultural centers within the metropolitan area (e.g. museums, historical sites, theaters, etc.) where teachers studied particular works of art and their relationship to basic thinking skills. Presented by Carol Fineberg, CF Associates.

"Aesthetic Education," a three-week series of classes and performances. Presented by the Lincoln Center Institute.

"The Student as Critic," A workshop for teachers (5 sessions) examining the domain of aesthetic criticism and how it can be employed in the classroom. Presented by Carol Fineberg.

"Music and Movement," a workshop for teachers of pre-k through 3rd grade emphasizing how singing and dancing games can prepare children for reading and writing rhythm, choreography, and combining music and dance with poetry. Presented by Esther Nelson, Esther Nelson Workshops.

"Fundamentals of Ballet," a workshop for elementary teachers emphasizing the basic movements, language and combinations of classical ballet. Presented by Janet Springer and her students, Springer Academy of Dance.

"Aesthetic Inquiry in the Classroom" a workshop on the expressive properties of drawing. Presented by Randy Williams at the Metropolitan Museum of Art.

"Introducing Aesthetic Criticism to Children," a workshop preented by Carol Fineberg.

"Dance in the Classroom," presented by teachers from the New Rochelle schools and Shirley Rushing, artist, New York Foundation for the Arts.

"Music in the Classroom," presented by Norman Brooks, Music Director, New Rochelle schools.

"Maskmaking," presented by Ronald Sallon, L.A. Mask Theater.

"Understanding Children's Art," presented by Amy Sneider, Pratt Institute.

"Painting in the Classroom," presented by Adrienne Garnett, art teacher, New Rochelle schools.

"Using Wildcliff Children's Museum," presented by the staff of Wildcliff Children's Museum.

"Personal Recollections: My Life as a Dancer," Pauline Koner, artist, New York Foundation for the Arts.

An additional feature of the AIE staff development program was to enable selected teachers and principals to attend workshops at the annual conferences sponsored by the State Education Department. Those who attended were able to preview performing or visual artists or learn about promising practices in other districts.

Many of the workshops were offered under the auspices of the Title IV C program or grants from the New York Foundation for the Arts. Teachers were paid a small stipend for their participation as part of their overall involvement in curriculum development for the Arts in Education.

Mean Differences on Ross Test of Higher Cognitive Processes
Grade 4 - Total District
N = 103

Subtest	$\bar{x}$ Mean	Stand. Dev.	t value
Analogies	2.75	2.34	11.85
Deductive Reasoning	1.87	2.90	6.19
Missing Processes	1.46	2.40	6.13
Abstract Reasoning	1.11	3.93	2.83
Sequential Synthesis	2.51	3.67	6.90
Questioning Strategies	2.03	2.64	7.75
Irrelevant Information	1.67	2.87	5.89
Analysis of Attributes	1.32	3.26	4.08
Total Test	13.79	11.44	12.20

Mean Differences on Ross Test of Higher Cognitive Processes
Grade 6 - Total District
N = 91

Subtest	$\bar{x}$ Mean	Stand. Dev.	t value
Analogies	.88	2.74	3.06
Deductive Reasoning	1.23	3.23	3.62
Missing Processes	.97	2.04	4.53
Abstract Reasoning	.82	3.58	2.19
Sequential Synthesis	1.05	3.66	2.69
Questioning Strategies	.92	2.21	3.98
Irrelevant Information	1.96	2.92	6.42
Analysis of Attributes	1.33	3.47	3.67
Total Test	10.57	11.05	9.11

Mean Standard Scores on Torrence Test of Creative Thinking - 8/82 and 8/83
(N=85)

	Pretest		Posttest		Difference	
Test Section	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Fluency	105.23	21.01	103.40	18.94	- 1.84 (t= .70)ns	23.97
Originality	108.47	22.02	104.82	20.17	- 3.64 (t=1.12)ns	29.73
Elaboration	88.49	11.74	97.85	13.26	+ 9.31 (t=6.24)Sig	13.67
Average	101.57	12.91	102.02	12.32	+ .47 (t= .05)ns	16.31

COMPARISON OF PRETEST-POSTTEST ART VOCABULARY TEST SCORES BY SCHOOL AND DISTRICT

School	N	Means		
		Pretest	Posttest	Difference
Columbus	14	33.42 (16.39)	43.21 (13.74)	+ 9.79
Davis	13	60.30 (9.28)	56.00 (8.75)	- 4.30
Webster	15	39.00 (10.97)	49.66 (13.01)	+10.66
Jefferson	8	40.00 (11.80)	50.37 (10.44)	+10.37
Trinity	18	43.55 (17.07)	52.66 (10.81)	+ 9.11
Ward	18	46.77 ((8.70)	62.77 (9.20)	+16.00
District	87	44.11 (14.43)	53.19 (12.63)	+ 9.08 (10.61) (t=7.96)Sign

Standard Deviations in ())

Score = # Right — # Wrong/3